BRITISH COLUMBIA
The Best Place on Earth

Leading Edge
ENDOWMENT FUND

NEWS RELEASE

For Immediate Release
2007AE0080-001587
Dec. 7, 2007

Ministry of Advanced Education

REGIONAL SPORT INNOVATION CHAIR TO BENEFIT ATHLETES

VICTORIA – The Province is investing $1.25 million to endow a B.C. Regional Innovation Chair in Sport Technology that will be housed in the Pacific Sport Institute at Camosun College, announced Advanced Education Minister Murray Coell today. The new chair will provide resources in sport performance, technology, health and education to help develop new sport-based technologies and innovations.

Potential products for development include performance enhancing clothing and playing surfaces, as well as improved monitoring and judging equipment, and assistive devices for disabled athletes.

"The provincial government is committed to supporting research and innovation," said Coell. "Sport technology development provides opportunities for students, promotes growth of this industry and supports ongoing improvement in athletic performance."

Dr. Tim Walzak is the B.C. Regional Innovation Chair in Sport Technology recipient. He is a technology transfer specialist and materials engineer with extensive experience in a wide range of innovation-related activities, including basic research, experimental design, development of applications and prototypes, protection of intellectual property, identification of commercialization opportunities and establishment of spin-off companies in a broad range of science and technology areas.

"I am honoured to accept this B.C. Innovation Chair and I want to thank the Ministry of Advanced Education on behalf of myself and all those who will ultimately benefit from the sport technology developments we will create," said Walzak. "Researchers, athletes, coaches, students and industry will come together to create a hub of innovation and commercialization for the development of leading-edge products that will enhance the performance of athletes, and play a key role in understanding the link between physical activity and the health and well-being of all Canadians."

The $2.5-million B.C. Regional Innovation Chair in Sport Technology is funded by a $1.25-million investment from the Province's Leading Edge Endowment Fund, and $1.25 million in matching funding from private donors.

"Technology transfer from sport to medical and industrial applications is a largely untapped area," said Coell. "The chair's research has a huge potential to impact the health and wellness of Canadians and the Canadian economy by adapting high-performance products to the general market."

-more-

"I am extremely proud that Camosun College is one of the first colleges in B.C. to receive a Leading Edge Endowment Chair," said Camosun president Dr. Liz Ashton. "This new regional chair will help to bring together Canadian leaders in sport science and technology to improve knowledge, innovation and technology development and commercialization in the fields of sport, health and wellness."

The $56.25-million Leading Edge Endowment Fund will support 20 leadership chairs and nine regional innovation chairs across B.C., with matching funds to be secured by post-secondary institutions from external partners. Since 2001, British Columbia has invested over $1.5 billion in research and innovation across the province.

This is the province's third B.C. Regional Innovation Chair. Regional innovation chairs support applied research, development and innovation that will bolster regional economic and social development in all areas of the province; attract highly qualified people in areas relevant to regional social and economic development; and support collaboration between post-secondary institutions.

-30-

Media contact: Corinna Filion
Communications Manager
250 952-6400
250 812-7977 (cell)

For more information on government services or to subscribe to the Province's news feeds using RSS, visit the Province's website at www.gov.bc.ca.